DIORAMA,

REGENT'S PARK.

TWO VIEWS,

70 FEET BY 50,

OF THE

CATHEDRAL OF CHARTRES,

AND THE

HARBOUR OF BREST.

PAINTED

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DESCRIPTION

OF THE

TWO PICTURES.

Brest Harbour.

Brest, one of the principal towns of the ancient province of Britany, and now the seat of the *sous-préfecture* of Finistère, lies to the westward of Paris, in 6°-49 east longitude, and in 48°-23-14 north latitude; its distance from Paris is 138 leagues.

In the explanation we are about to give of the picture which represents *a View of Brest Harbour*, we propose following the order that has been adopted by the authors of the Diorama.

The view is taken from within the Rose Battery, so called from its position on the top of a rock named the Rose, owing to its form, which reminds us of the diamond bearing that name. The rock is at the entrance, on the right of the harbour.

1. *Gate of the Rose Battery.*—This gate, painted green, as well as those of the whole enclosure, is the entrance to a battery which commands the road on the eastern side, defends the mouth of the harbour, with the assistance of several other batteries (the *masked* one for instance) lined with guns of the largest size, and the royal battery lined with twenty-four brass pieces of cannon, and renders its approach impossible for a hostile squadron.

2. *The ground for cannon shot, close by the Rose Battery.*

3. *Magdalen Tower.*—This tower forms part of an old castle which defends the approach to *Brest* by the road.

4. *Brest Tower.*—From our present point of observation, it is the second tower of the irregular castle, whose ruins afford a curious field for research.

5. *North-East end of the Castle*—This platform bears no resemblance to a fortification, with the exception of its exterior lines. In the direction of *Brest*, it forms a continua-

tion of the citadel of the castle. The children of the neighbourhood have chosen this ground for the theatre of their amusements.

6. *The machine for masting ships of large dimensions.*— This ingeniously erected machine rests upon a level base of considerable size and elevation. The combination of powers in this invention for masting, the finest of any in the French military harbours, is of a very simple nature; its motion is very quick, and its strength adequate to the greatest efforts. Ships of the line undergo the process of masting and unmasting, in less than one hour.

At the foot of the masting machine, and a little further on, is a creek called the masting creek. This, and another point close upon the harbour gate, which are discovered below the small steeple N°. 10, to be noticed hereafter, are the usual points of communication between *Brest* and *Recouvrance.*

Issuing from the gate which is near the masting machine and closes the quay, a street is perceived on the right hand, the lower extremity of which is below the level of the higher extremity of the whole elevation of the platform N°. 5. A single staircase of 100 steps connects the higher with the lower point of this street, called the *Seven Saints*, a name which it derives from an old church, founded under the patronage of the Seven Martyrs who were canonised in the early days of the christian era.

A street, or rather a road rendered practicable for carriages, leads from the extremity of the street above mentioned to the citadel of the castle, and directly in front of that beautiful promenade, the *Cours d'Ajot.*

This promenade, of which we discover a few trees above the castle, consists of four rows of young elms forming three spacious long avenues. It begins at the walls of the castle, and extends to the ramparts. A protection wall, which connects the fortified works of Brest with the citadel, extends breast high along the *Cours d'Ajot*, from whence the eye embraces a roadsted of about nine leagues in circumference. This view is undoubtedly the finest that can be imagined.

7. *The Telegraph of St. Louis' Tower.*—This telegraph is in communication with Paris; the first signals are with the height which commands *Brest* on the side of *Landernau.*

The church of St. Louis, above the telegraph in question, is rather spacious; it bears no stamp of that sublime style

that prevailed at the time of its construction. Its architecture is poor, and devoid of ornament. This edifice is said to have cost upwards of 300,000 livres.

8. *The Hospital.*—The Jesuits possessed, close to the church of St. Louis, a seminary, the buildings of which, of little extent in the origin, but afterwards augmented by others of a light form, that have been erected on the scite of the old gardens of the convent, are destined for the reception of the sick and wounded belonging to all the military corps, and especially the navy.

Close to the old seminary stands the burned hospital. This hospital, which was set fire to several years back, is reserved for the inhabitants of *Brest*. It is entirely civil in its destination.

Between this edifice, and the hospital of St. Louis are observed some very fine quarters intended for the naval artillery.

8. *(Bis.) A small observatory over the naval quarters.*

9. *A fountain upon the Quay.*—This is a modern monument done in a very plain style.

The quay upon which this fountain stands is lined with ugly low houses. This part of the harbour is situated between the Rose creek, and the creek of the Intendance, which is chiefly for merchant vessels.

10. *The Harbour Clock.*—The small steeple discovered in this place stands over an edifice, that ranks foremost of all those which compose the arsenal of Brest built by Louis XIV, in 1669. The building seen above the Harbour Clock is occupied by the pupils of the drawing academy, the library, the offices of the naval town major, and of the harbour works. One of the halls in this edifice goes by the name of the Hall of Models. In this place are collected together, for the instruction of naval officers and pupils, the models of ships of every size and dimension, whether of ancient or of modern forms; the models of men of war of all classes; and copies, in small proportions, of floating machines employed for various purposes in the harbour.

Facing the clock is a dock for receiving frigates and corvettes that have to undergo repairs; the entrance of this dock is closed by a dam, that serves as a communication between the quay of the general magazine and the harbour gate, the opening of which is concealed from our view by the extreme houses forming the angle of the commercial quay and of the main street, the most considerable street in *Brest*.

11. *The Bagnio, the higher and lower Rope Walks, &c.*— These vast edifices, the longitudinal angles of which are seen to extend in perspective lines as far as the fourth plan of the picture, are the most considerable of the naval arsenal. The lower parts consist of two distinct wings, comprising the rope yards, and above them the *Bagnio*, an extensive building in which are confined all prisoners condemned to chains and to the painful works of the harbours, since the galleys have been suppressed.

The rope yards are of nearly equal dimensions. We do not exactly know of how many feet their length may consist; but can safely affirm that it does not fall short of twice the length of a first-rate man of war's cable, and may therefore be estimated at about 1200 feet.

Behind the edifices, the objects of which have just been pointed out, the bason of the harbour forms, in turning to the right, an angle of about seventy-five degrees; at one of the extreme sides of the angle, that which is directly opposite to the rope yards, in an inverse sense, a somewhat sharper angle, and in the same direction an obtuse one, thereby presenting that extremity of the harbour as the figure of *Y* with its branches wide apart.

There are several buildings to be seen on both sides. On the right, and in a line with the quays, the canons, and the anchors, are found the store houses for *prelars* (tarred and painted cloths), the wine stores, the awnings and magazines for pleasure boats, for making pulleys, &c. Turning to the right, at the extremity of the creek of the powder mill, is the coopering store; further on, in the same direction, the shambles; on the left from the mouth of the *Persfeld* river, whose waters fall into the bason of *Brest* harbour, are seen a paper mill; the creek for the construction of small corvettes and other vessels of little dimensions; the stocks, called *la Montagne*, for building ship boats and small craft, the masting magazine, the workhouses for the ornamentalsculpture of ships, the joiners' shops, the ordnance offices, and the extensive building which we observe covered over with a half cylindrical roof, and resting upon a multitude of pillars formed like short quadrangular pyramids. This building, indicated by N°. 12, is the *covered creek;* under its covering the largest sized ships are constructed. The *Nestor*, the *Orion*, &c. have come of late years from those stocks; the workmanship of the creek is the production of *M. Sané*, a very skilfu

engineer, and is considered to be a master-piece in its kind. The ship on the stocks in the covered creek is *la Couronne.* This side of the creek is a sloping surface, upon which frigates and large corvettes are commonly constructed.

13. *The locksmiths', sailmakers', and blacksmiths' works,* where all the iron and sails are prepared for the fitting out of ships.

Beyond these work-shops, are two large docks; the one is covered over, and capable of containing two ships; the other, which is closer to the harbour, is uncovered. These two docks, the masonry of which is very solid, are destined for the reception of first rate ships that may have suffered considerable damage, and require to be refitted and new coppered.

14. *The Woods and Dwelling of the Capuchines.*—This old convent, the woods of which crown the heights that command the harbour on the left side, is assigned over, as a property, to one of the military authorities of the harbour. At the foot of the mountain upon which is situated the Capuchine Convent, may be seen a house newly finished, and applied to the purpose of a prison.

15. *Pontanion* is the name of this house.

16. *Quarter of the Recouvrance.*—This side of the city of *Brest* is very different from the right side; it is, generally speaking, inhabited by the workmen of the harbour. An old church consecrated to *Notre-Dame de-Recouvrance* was in great repute in this quarter. Sea-faring men had enriched it with donations, which, under the temporary influence of their fears, they had pledged themselves to present.

Some work-shops belonging to the arsenal, and amongst them the battery in the direction of the *Recouvrance,* are descried outside the picture on the left, and on a level with the spectator. Below the elevation where we are standing, may be seen the *Chain,* a kind of floating gate which is closed at the beat of drum in the harbour and roadsted, on a signal given by the firing of a gun from a half-circular battery named the *Horse Shoe.* This *Horse Shoe* faces the *Rose Battery,* and is erected upon the ruins of a large tower, which, together with the castle, contributed to the protection of *Brest* in former times.

We cannot state with any accuracy the names of the unrigged ships that are seen in the picture before us. Those we have it in our power to name are the *Admiral,* a cut down man of war rigged with a single mast, which the be-

holder will easily distinguish by its blue and white awning. The *Amiral* is a kind of head quarters for the officers who are under the orders of the chiefs of the several departments connected with the harbour. The *Duc d'Angoulême* a three decker, and the *Duguay Trouin* a 74 gun ship. Both ships are unrigged, and preserved from the intemperature of the climate by immense *prelars* (pieces of tarred canvass) impenetrable to rain. The same precautions are taken for preserving every ship in the harbour, or not intended for active service.

Brest deserves to be better known than through a picture, however faithful in its description (and the one that engages our attention claims no less merit in this character than as a work of art). The Arsenal of Brest was founded by Louis XIV, and carried on by Louis XV and Louis XVI, and embellished 20 years ago by Bonaparte. This arsenal, as a whole, or in its details, is well worthy the attention of men not exclusively attracted by trifling objects.

Notre-Dame-de-Chartres.

Chartres, an old and a considerable town, at the distance of 23 leagues from Paris in a south westerly direction, stands in 50°-55 west longitude, and 48°-26-54 north latitude ; its situation and its agricultural and commercial importance have given to it, amongst towns of the second class, that rank which, in the division of France into departments, is assigned to cities chosen for the residence of an administrative authority. Chartres is the seat of the prefecture of Eure and Loire. The ancient province of Beauce acknowledged it for its capital. Its population amounts to about 13,800 inhabitants.

The situation of Chartres, which is built over deep caverns, justifies the appellation of the city of Dens given to it by Ptolemy.

The church of Notre-Dame, now exhibited, is one of the finest gothic remains still extant in France. The epocha of its foundation is not accurately known. Like all the edifices and institutions of ages long gone by, its cradle is surrounded with stories equally marvellous and incredible.

We shall not attempt to throw an imperfect light over the gloom in which the early days of the Cathedral of Chartres are enveloped; it will be sufficient to repeat the words of Mr. Gilbert, the author of a valuable account of this monument: " It may be considered as certain that St. Lavinien and St. Potentien, founders of the metropolitan church of Sens, came to Chartres; and that St. Aventin their disciple, who is acknowledged to have been the first bishop of this city, laid the foundation of the first church, towards the end of the third century."

We must observe that several portions, such as the southern gate (with the exception of the porch which appears to belong to the twelfth century), the principal gate and the two steeples, were constructed at a rather later period than that of its earliest foundation. Those who have seen the Cathedral of Chartres such as it exists in the present day, and who possess some knowledge of the science of antiquities, will easily discover, on an inspection of this edifice, the period to which each part may be assigned, as well as the traces of the various tastes displayed in its erection.

We think it unnecessary to say any thing of the two celebrated steeples, the finest ornaments of the Cathedral of Chartres, or to enter into details devoid of interest, as being inapplicable to any visible object of the picture exhibited to our view, concerning the external architecture of the cathedral, or the numerous accessaries that embellish its gates, its porches, its fret-work, or its galleries.

We shall take no notice of the subterraneous church, but confine ourselves to the upper church, that has afforded to the authors of the Diorama the subject of the picture, of the different parts of which we are now to present a description.

In the circumference of the double row of pillars extending all round the closed choir, whose elegant enclosure is presented to our view, seven chapels, of various forms and dimensions, occupy the places which each casement or compartment in the foreground of the church seems to have been designed to supply, in the distribution of the building. The position of the spectator is supposed to be in one of these chapels, close to which the painter has placed us for our better enjoyment of the view, and which are respectively called the Knights' Chapel, and the Penitentiarys' Chapel.

The Penitentiarys' Chapel occupies no visible point in the picture; it is comprised in the space which is represented by the spot we now occupy; the entrance of the Knights' Chapel, on the left side of the picture, is entirely on the first plane surface; it is known by a semi-circular grate, of about three feet in height. The statue, which we discover on a pedestal close to the wall that separates this chapel from the adjoining one called the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, is a representation of Jesus Christ, such as he appeared to Mary Magdalen after his resurrection.

The chapel of St. John the Baptist, which we have just mentioned, adjoins the Knights' Chapel. The communication with it is through the double row of pillars, by a small flight of stairs with an iron balustrade, the slope of which forms, with the pavement, an angle of about twenty-five degrees.

On the plane surface, further removed from us, we distinguish the Chapel of All Saints, closed by an iron grate ornamented with a pediment, the style of which is of no remote antiquity. This grate, now used as an enclosure to the chapel, belonged in former times to the Church of St. Pierre (St. Peter), one of the churches that were either demolished or suppressed in the course of the revolution.

In the direction of the pillar, against which is placed the velvet standard of a brotherhood, and behind the pillar of the third plane surface, against which is suspended a picture representing a religious subject, there is a small chapel, not within our view; it is named the Chapel of St. Lazarus.

The Chapel of the Scourging is on the right of the beholder, near the pillar which receives a reflexion from the blue colours of the windows that are shone upon by the rays of the sun.

Another chapel entirely concealed from our view, and standing between the Chapel of the Scourging and that in which several persons are seen kneeling at the foot of an image of the Virgin Mary, is called the Chapel of the Transfiguration.

Not far from this seventh chapel, we find leaning against a column, though at a rather considerable elevation from the ground, a sculptured group of a dark colour, the appearance of which indicates antiquity. It represents the Madona who is held in much reverence in the Church of Notre-Dame-de-Chartres. A light is continually burning at the feet of the Virgin, and proceeds from a lamp which receives the reflexion of the sun's rays, and is observed to shine with great brilliance

in the obscure corner in the second lower aisle on the left hand. The figure of the Virgin was transferred to this place in 1772.

The enclosure of the choir, which takes up the centre of the picture, is a composition of a gothic style, well worthy the attention and the admiration of connoisseurs. Its architecture is of exceeding richness, and its ornaments are in the best taste. The same may be said of the figures which add to its splendour. The basso relievos inchased in the massive parts, and contained within the angles which give to the semi-circumference of the choir, the form of a prism with angles of equal length, uniformly represent subjects taken from the lives of Jesus Christ and of the Virgin Mary.

We shall now explain the subjects of those that are within our view, and commence by the left hand side.

The first basso relievo that we perceive (the 19th of the collection) represents the adultress; the second our Saviour restoring the blind man to sight; the third (which is the first on the right of the great pillar that takes up the first plane surface ground) the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem; the fourth the inhabitants of Jerusalem rushing forward towards our Saviour, and strewing the ground with branches of palm tree. The subject of the fifth is our Saviour in the Garden of Olives; the sixth represents the treachery of Judas, and Peter's violence towards Malchus. In the seventh and last, we see Jesus Christ tied to a pillar and scourged by his executioners.

It would be difficult to name the authors of these basso relievos, the greater part of which are deserving of particular notice; we have but a vague information respecting them. In order that we may avoid assigning to the chisel of one artist what may be owing to the talent of another, we shall not attempt to couple with each of the basso relievos, the name of its supposed author; but content ourselves with observing that Jean Texier was the architect upon whose models this fine monument of architecture was executed between the years 1514 and 1539; and that Thibaut, Boudin, Dieu, Le Gros, and many other sculptors successively contributed to its perfection. The work was not completed until the years 1700 to 1706; the labours of the artists just mentioned have not a more recent date than 1681. When, under the reign of Louis XIV, the Metropolitan Chapel of Paris came to the resolution of embellishing the choir of Notre Dame, the Cathedral chapters decided at the same time upon similar repairs in their respective churches.

The small gilt carved roses that are observed on the exter-

nal contour of the vaulted arches in the form of ogees, and lowering upon the choir, are ornaments which Messrs. Daguerre and Bouton have ingeniously indicated in this part of the church, though they have carefully avoided presenting them to the view of the spectator.

We shall not enter into any farther details respecting those parts of the picture which arrest our view. We shall not draw the attention to those motionless accessaries which contribute to the illusion created by the correct representation of this wonderful work of architecture; we shall leave unnoticed the priest who will be overtaken by night in his meditative contemplation—the congregation of faithful who in honor of the divine mysteries remain so long on their knees before the holy images—the seats that seem to have been placed in their present position, as exhibited to our view, in order to try the sagacity of the beholders, in distinguishing what is nature itself from what is the effect of art—as well as every other object that creates our admiration; they appear as evidences of the talents of two artists, whose merits have been too universally appreciated to require any eulogium on our part.

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